

## A Few Autograph Letters By Women Writers

1. HALE, Sarah Josepha (1788-1879) author of *Mary's Little Lamb*, journalist. **Autograph sentiment:** "True friendship is no plant of hast growth. Though rooted in esteem's dep soil, the slow and gradual culture of kind intercourse must bring it to perfection. Sarah Josepha Hale Philadelphia, March 13, 1843." \$275.00

Brown ink on a single letter-sized sheet.

2. HOWE, Julia Ward. **ALs. 241 Beacon St, April 6th, 1882.** 2 pp, 12mo. Folded, fine. \$275.00

A brief letter, arranging a visit. "Dear Mrs. Firkins (?), I write a line only to say I will surely come to you this spring, unless prevented by some very serious obstacle wh[ich] I cannot now forsee. How will Saturday 29th April answer? Glad you are so well and so hopeful. Yrs cordially and in haste, Julia W. Howe."

3. PHELPS, Almira Lincoln, 1793-1884, educator, botanist and sister of Emma Willard. **ALs. Baltimore, Aug. 19, 1878** To Miss Julia E. Smith, Glastonbury, Connecticut (see below.). 4 pp 12mo, on embossed stationery. With original envelope. \$475.00

A fine, intimate letter, linking two important 19th c, American women, written late in life by the noted pioneer of female education, sister of Emma Willard (and teacher at her school,) and author of the influential *Familiar Lectures in Botany*. The letter touches upon details of family life, including her three children, now grown, as well as a family ward, "a sad case of premature senility... I took a young girl... to live with me till she should be 18 years old. She has never left me, is now 67 years old, but feeble and tremulous...I long since made her as one of my family. but the case is melancholy." She commiserates with her correspondent Smith, who like her is the last remaining member of her family, mentioning Emma Willard's death in 1870. Signed "Almira Lincoln Phelps."

Julia Evelina Smith Parker (1792-1886), was educated at Emma Willard's school, and gained distinction as being the only female translator of the Bible, and the only translator to do so without any help. She and her sister Abby Hadassah Smith were outspoken suffragists who sparked a revolution against women being subject to taxation without representation, which became a widely attended affair known as "Abby Smith and her Cows." For both sisters, see *Notable American Women* Vol. 3, pp. 302-304.

4. ROSSETTI, Christina. **ALs. 30 Torrington Square - W. C., Dec. 1 [1888?], to Mr. William Bryant, signed "Christina G. Rosetti.** 4 pp. half-sheet foolscap. Folded, in original envelope, addressed in CR's hand. \$675.00

The recipient of this letter was for a time secretary to the poet and journalist Mackenzie Bell, friend and biographer of Christina Rossetti. At the time of this letter, Bryant and his wife were in reduced circumstances and ill health and he made repeated requests for financial aid from an increasingly exasperated Rossetti, who here makes clear her inability to do provide it: "That last application to which I with an effort responded professed to be final: do not force me to keep reminding you that so it was. You give me indeed a sad picture of your misery: what can I say, but that the Infirmary holds out to you sick necessaries and the hope of renewed health and

ability to work should work offer? Your thus taking care of yourself would relieve your good wife from part of her daily struggle with dire poverty, and would perhaps enable you once more to occupy your natural post as bread winner." She goes on to explain her lack of funds and necessity for "continual economy." Another of Rossetti's letters in this exchange was sold at Bonham's in 2001, lot 1061 (\$ 600.+)

5. THAXTER, Celia, poet. **ALs, 2pp., to Mrs. Fuller. Shoals, May, nd [Ca. 188-].** Mounted, neat separation along fold, tear to blank portion. \$325.00

Thaxter writes to a prospective summer guest at her summer retreat: "I have saved for you the room you had last year, looking west, you know, toward my brother Cedric's house - it has the advantage of a stove in it over Mrs. Eichberg's room, but if you prefer hers, kindly let me know on account of other folk... Shall be glad to see you among the early comers. Please pardon short note as I am SO busy!" Signed "Celia Thaxter." Mrs. Fuller was possibly the wife of Col. Charles Emerson Fuller, who attended Thaxter's funeral - see NY Times obit. Mrs. Eichberg was Sophie Eichberg, a friend and correspondent of Thaxter.

#### **WITH STANZAS FROM AN UNCOLLECTED POEM**

6. THAXTER, Celia, American poet, author and artist. **ALs, 47 State St. Ports[mouth]. Oct. 18th, 1890, to "Miss Abbott."** 2 pp. 12mo. \$875.00

A letter with excellent literary content. Thaxter replies to a request for a magazine contribution, thanking her correspondent for kind words about her work, mentioning her brother Oscar Loughton - "he has published several beautiful things in the Atlantic & other magazines" - and offering "two verses of a poem which was published a few years ago in the Century which is not included in any of my books..." The two verses in eight lines, beginning "Remember this - not all the wild," follow. These are taken from "The Only Foe," a poem which was never collected. Thaxter closes with a post script, "Yes - Portsmouth is a dear old town - I was born here. I live now at the corner of Penhallow and State Sts."

Thaxter's correspondent may have been Frances M. Abbott, a New Hampshire naturalist and writer, who in 1889 edited and published an anthology of New Hampshire poets that included Thaxter's work. However we find no record of a magazine connected with her.